

**The University of Toronto
Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures**

German 351H Fall: German Cinema

Fall 2009, Tuesday 10 am - 2 pm, place TBA



Course Description

This course will present students with a survey of the history and development of the German cinema. Starting with canonical films by Wiene, Lang, and Riefenstahl and ending with contemporary German cinema by Weingartner and Akin, we will examine major trends of German cinematography. In order to come to a better understanding of how one can define “German” cinema, our focus will be on thematic and formal aspects. This focus leads to two groups of questions:

1. What is the relationship between a specific film and its historical-cultural context? Is this relationship for us overt or hidden? What does (or did) a German audience see in the film?
2. German films might reflect on German issues, but is there a “German” film language? What are the theoretical and formal concerns of German film makers?

The title of this course is “German Cinema,” however, throughout the course we will also question whether something like “German Cinema” exists at all.

Course Objectives

The goal of this course is to make students familiar with the German film canon, to enable them to use a variety of theoretical and technical terms for film interpretation, and to make them aware of central issues in German historical self-understanding.

The methodology in this course will be a combination of close sequence analysis and broad historical and cultural perspectives. Our work in class will be shaped by class discussions, group work, and occasional lectures.

Please note: proficiency in German is a prerequisite for the course; films and assignments will be in German; discussions too, except for clarification purposes.

Instructor's Contact Information

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Filme (*Änderungen vorbehalten*)

Robert Wiene, *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (1919/20) {55' }

Fritz Lang, *M* (1931) {117' }

Leni Riefenstahl, *Triumph des Willens* (1934/35) {114' }

Veit Harlan, *Jud Süß* (1940) {97' }

Wolfgang Staudte, *Die Mörder sind unter uns* (1946) {90' }

Rainer Werner Fassbinder, *Die Ehe der Maria Braun* (1978) {120' }

Hans Weingartner, *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei* (2003/04) {129' }

Kurt Maetzig, *Das Kaninchen bin ich* (1964/65) {114' }

Wolfgang Becker, *Good Bye, Lenin!* (2001/03) {117' }

Fatih Akin, *Gegen die Wand* (2003/04) {121' }